

## Message Text

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ACTION ACDA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-08 ISO-00 ACDE-00 AEC-05 CIAE-00 H-01

INR-05 IO-04 L-01 NSAE-00 OIC-01 OMB-01 PA-01 PM-03

PRS-01 SAJ-01 SAM-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00

RSC-01 NSC-05 AECE-00 DRC-01 /074 W

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FM USDEL MBFR VIENNA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0516

SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

INFO USMISSION NATO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USCINCEUR

USNMR SHAPE

S E C R E T MBFR VIENNA 0326

FROM US REP MBFR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO

SUBJECT: MBFR: DISCUSSION WITH SOVIET REPS ON OCTOBER  
17, 1974

FOLLOWING IS REPORT OF DISCUSSION WITH SOVIET REPS  
ON OCTOBER 17 WHICH WILL BE DISTRIBUTED TO AD  
HOC GROUP ON MONDAY OCTOBER 21.

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: AT US INITIATIVE, ON OCTOBER 17  
US REP AND DEPREP HAD INFORMAL TALK WITH SOVIET REPS  
KHLESTOV AND SMIRNOVSKY. DISCUSSED FOCUSED ON SOVIET  
FIRST STEP PROPOSAL AND PRODUCED A FEW NEW ELEMENTS. US REP  
SAID HE WAS SURPRISED THAT EAST HAD RE-INTRODUCED INITIAL  
REDUCTION FIRST STEP PROPOSAL, WHICH ALLIES HAD REJECTED  
IN MARCH AND JUNE ON GROUNDS IT WOULD CODIFY THE PRESENT  
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RELATIONSHIP OF FORCES. HE ASKED SOVIET REPS WHAT SOVIET

MOTIVATION HAD BEEN IN REINTRODUCING THIS IDEA AS FORMAL PROPOSAL.

2. IN RESPONSE, SOVIET REPS CLAIMED THAT WESTERN MODIFICATIONS OF ORIGINAL WESTERN POSITION ON PHASING HAD ADDED LITTLE TO THE UNREALISTIC POSITION WEST HAD TAKEN ON THIS SUBJECT AT THE OUTSET. SOVIETS ON OTHER HAND HAD STARTED FROM MORE REASONABLE STARTING POINT AND HAD MODIFIED THAT IN THE DIRECTION OF HAVING US-SOVIET REDUCTIONS FIRST AND POSTPONING REDUCTIONS OF OTHERS. SOVIET REPS SAID THEY WERE NOT YET IN A POSITION TO COMMENT ON ALLIED SUGGESTIONS FOR REVISION OF GROUND FORCE DEFINITION BUT WOULD DO SO IN DUE COURSE. END SUMMARY.

3. US REP OPENED DISCUSSION BY SAYING HE WAS SURPRISED AT SOVIETS HAVING RE-INTRODUCED THEIR INITIAL REDUCTION STEP PROPOSAL. AS FAR AS US REP COULD SEE, IT WAS THE SAME PROPOSAL EAST HAD MADE LAST MARCH AND AGAIN IN JUNE. ALLIED REPS HAD MADE CLEAR TO EAST THEN THAT THIS PROPOSAL CAUSED SEVERE DIFFICULTIES FOR WEST AND THAT MAIN WESTERN OBJECTION TO IT WAS THAT IT WOULD CODIFY THE PRESENT INEQUITABLE RELATIONSHIP OF GROUND FORCES. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, US REP COULD NOT UNDERSTAND SOVIET MOTIVATION IN BRINGING UP THIS IDEA AGAIN AT THIS POINT. HE WOULD BE PLEASED IF SOVIET REP COULD EXPLAIN SOVIET MOTIVES OR WHETHER THERE WAS ANYTHING MORE TO PROPOSAL BEYOND WHAT SOVIET REP HAD ALREADY STATED. MOREOVER, SINCE THE EAST HAD ADVANCED THIS PROPOSAL IN JUNE, THE ALLIES HAD INTRODUCED SEVERAL NEW IMPORTANT STEPS.

4. US REP SAID HE HAD ORIGINALLY SUGGESTED THE PRESENT DISCUSSION IN ORDER TO TRY TO MAKE CLEAR TO SOVIET REPS IMPORTANCE OF THE WESTERN SUGGESTIONS ON REVISING DEFINITION OF GROUND FORCES. US REP THEN DESCRIBED WESTERN POSITION ON THIS SUBJECT ON LINES USED IN INFORMAL SESSION OCTOBER 15 AND URGED THAT SOVIETS GIVE SERIOUS ATTENTION TO IT. KHESTOV SAID THIS SUBJECT WAS A COMPLICATED ONE. SOVIETS HAD NOT YET WORKED OUT ALL THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE WESTERN PROPOSAL. THEY COULD NOT SPEAK TO IT ON THIS OCCASION BUT WOULD MAKE THEIR VIEWS KNOWN IN DUE COURSE.

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5. KHESTOV SAID THAT WITH REGARD TO US REP'S QUESTIONS ABOUT SOVIET MOTIVIES IN PUTTING FORWARD FIRST STEP PROPOSAL, THESE WERE PERFECTLY ABOVE BOARD. US AND SOVIETS BOTH AGREED THAT SOME SPECIFIC MOVEMENT WAS NECESSARY IN THE NEGOTIATIONS IN ORDER TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR VIABILITY AND PREVENT THEIR BECOMING BOGGED DOWN. THE SOVIETS CONTINUED TO THINK THEIR OVERALL PROPOSAL OF NOVEMBER 8 WAS

A GOOD ONE. THEY REALIZED, HOWEVER, THAT WEST DID NOT AGREE AND WAS STICKING BY ITS ORIGINAL POSITION SO SOME STEP WHICH WOULD NOT PREJUDICE THE POSITIONS OF EITHER SIDE WAS NECESSARY. THE WESTERN MODIFICATIONS OF THE WESTERN POSITION ON THE QUESTION OF WHOSE FORCES SHOULD REDUCE FROM THE OUTSET HAD BEEN LIMITED TO INSUBSTNTIAL ADDITIONS TO A STARTING POSITION WHICH WAS EXTREME IN ITS UNREALISM.

6. KHLESTOV SAID THE EAST'S STARTING POSITION HAD IN HIS VIEW BEEN MORE REALISTIC. HOWEVER, EAST HAD MOVED AWAY FROM IT IN ORDER TO MEET WESTERN INTERESTS. THE PREFERRED EASTERN POSITION WOULD BE TO PUT WESTERN EUROPEAN REDUCTIONS FIRST BUT EAST HAD MOVED AWAY EVEN FROM ITS OFFICIAL POSITION THAT ALL SHOULD REDUCE TOGETHER IN THE FACE OF REPEATED WESTERN URGING THAT THE US AND SOVIETS SHOULD REDUCE FIRST. IN DOING SO, THEY HAD ALSO PROPOSED THAT THE GERMANS AND POLES TAKE THE SAME AMOUNT OF REDUCTIONS BUT THEY WERE FLEXIBLE ON THIS POINT. THEY HAD MOVED BEYOND THEIR JUNE POSITION IN THAT THE PRESENT POSITION WAS OFFICIAL, THEY HAD MADE EXPLICIT THAT THE US AND SOVIETS WOULD REDUCE FIRST AND OTHERS LATER, AND THEY HAD MADE EEXPLICIT THE AMOUNTS OF REDUCTIONS PROPOSED.

7. US REP SAID THE PRESENT FIRST STEP PROPOSAL WAS FUNDAMENTALLY THE SAME AS THE JUNE PROPOSAL AND THAT IN TURN WAS FUNDAMENTALLY THE SAME AS THE FIRST STAGE OF THE WARSAW PACT PROPOSAL OF NOVEMBER 8, 1974. ALL THREE VERSIONS ENVISAGED REDUCTIONS BY ALL DIRECT PARTICIPANTS IN A FIRST REDUCTION STEP WITH AN EQUAL NUMBER OF 20,000 REDUCTION TAKEN BY BOTH SIDES. THIS POSITION DID NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT VALID WESTERN ARGUMENTS ABOUT THE NEED TO REDUCE THE DISPARITY IN GROUND FORCES AND THE NEED TO TAKE GEOGRAPHIC DISPARITIES INTO ACCOUNT. THE PROPOSAL  
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STILL ENVISAGED THAT THE WESTERN EUROPEANS WOULD REDUCE IN THE FIRST STAGE DESPITE REPEATED DEMONSTRATIONS BY WESTERN REPS THAT THE OBLIGATIONS MOST OTHER WESTERN DIRECT PARTICIPANTS WOULD UNDERTAKE WERE MORE COMPREHENSIVE THAN THOSE WHICH WOULD BE UNDERTAKEN BY THE SOVIET UNION AND UNITED STATES. AND IT OVERLOOKED THE FACT THAT FOR THE WESTERN EUROPEANS TO ENTER UPON THE CONTRACTUAL LIMITATIONS WHICH WOULD BE PART OF ANY AGREEMENT, THEY NEEDED THE ASSURANCE OF PRIOR SUBSTANTIAL SOVIET WITHDRAWALS AND SOVIET AGREEMENT TO GROUND FORCE PARITY.

8. SMIRNOVSKY CLAIMED THAT THESE WESTERN ARGUMENTS WERE MERELY A SMOKE SCREEN FOR RELUCTANCE OF THE WESTERN EUROPEANS TO MAKE ANY REDUCTIONS AT ALL. THE DISCUSSION CONTINUED INCONCLUSIVELY ALONG SAME LINES. SOVIET REPS DID NOT PUT

UP A STRONG DEFENSE AGAINST CHARGES THAT THEIR PRESENT  
PROPOSAL DIFFERED LITTLE FROM THEIR INFORMAL FIRST STEP  
PROPOSAL OF JUNE, BUT SOUGHT TO STRESS THE MOVEMENT IT  
REPRESENTED WHEN COMPARED WITH THE WARSAW PACT STARTING  
PROPOSAL.RESOR

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
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